1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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Pavement

In front of the house a semicircular space from 2 to 3 meters wide at the broadest part was paved with big rounded pebbles (*pureva*). There people spent their days working, chatting, or eating. The paved space (*kaepae*) was sometimes decorated with small coral rocks. Roggeveen (186, p. 18) says that he saw "round about their dwellings certain big blocks of hewn stones, three or four feet in breadth, and fitted together in a singularly neat and even manner; and according to our judgement, these serve them for a stoop on which to sit and chat during the cool of the evening." 342

FIGURE 17.—Entrance to a house at Ahu-te-peu, showing two small pillars at each side of entrance, and curbstones with holes for rafters.

Interior of House

The inside of the house was dark and bare says Forster (83, vol. 1, p. 570): 342 362

> We crept on all fours into this opening and found the inside of the hut perfectly naked and empty, there being not so much as a wisp of straw to lie down upon. We could not stand upright in any part except just in the middle, and the whole place appeared dark and dismal. The natives told us they passed the night in these huts, and we easily conceived their situation to be uncomfortable, especially as we saw so very few of them that they must be crammed full, unless the generality of the people lie in open air, and leave these wretched dwellings to their chiefs, or make use of them only in bad weather.

The most vivid description of hut interiors is given by Eyraud (81, p. 60), who slept in them several nights: 342 362 513

> Imagine a half open mussel, resting on the edge of its valves and you will have an idea of the form of that cabin. Some sticks covered with straw form its frame and roof. An oven-like opening allows its inhabitants to go inside as well as the visitors who have to creep not only on all fours but on their stomachs. This indicates the center of the building and lets enter enough light to see when you have been inside for a while. You have no idea how many Kanacs may find shelter under that thatch roof. It is rather hot inside, if you make abstraction of the little disagreements caused by the deficient cleanliness of the natives and the community of goods which inevitably introduces itself. . . . But by night time, when you do not find other refuge, you are forced to do as others do. Then everyone takes his place, the position being indicated to each by the nature of the spot. The door, being in the center, determines an axis which divides the hut into two equal parts. The heads, facing each other on each side of that axis, allow enough room between them to let pass those who enter or go out. So they lie breadthwise, as commodiously as possible, and try to sleep.

1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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An old man showed Routledge (194, p. 216) how they slept in the huts: "This was parallel to the long axis of the house, the head being towards the door; the old people were in the center in couples and the younger ones in the ends."

Size of Houses

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The houses must have varied considerably in size. Bernizet (130, vol. 2, pp. 256-257), after describing one of 300 feet, says: "The small cabins are of the ordinary form; the most of them so very small as not without difficulty to afford room enough for six persons."

The largest house on Easter Island of which dimensions have been recorded is that figured in La Pérouse's atlas (130, vol. 2, p. 256) and reproduced here (fig. 16). This enormous hut, which could easily shelter 200 individuals, was probably a community house (*hare-nui*). Judging by their remains, ancient houses were generally 10 to 15 meters long and 1.5 to 2 meters broad, giving shelter to about 30 persons. The largest house foundation measured is 40 meters long and 4 meters wide. These figures correspond roughly to estimates made by early visitors to the island (186, p. 17; 5, p. 356; 15, vol. 1, p. 55; 146, p. 274).

Disappearance of Ancient Houses

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In 1877 Pinart (178, p. 238) noticed that most of the huts were made of wood from wrecked ships and in the fashion of European cabins. At that time, few reed houses were to be seen in Hanga-roa. This change in the type of house was caused by the wrecking of a ship loaded with timber from Oregon. Under the guidance of a Danish carpenter, the natives built plank houses 25 feet long and 15 feet wide. Most of the buildings received light through very small doors, but some had windows and windowpanes. The roofs were made of planks or covered with banana leaves or long grass. The floors were of earth or covered with straw. In 1886 "several rough bedsteads and chests" were already in use (215, p. 454).

The small grass huts, which survived until 1917 (208, vol. 1, pl. 10), have now disappeared. The Easter Islanders who were deported to Tahiti early in the twentieth century erected huts in the old native style. However, many details of the structure show pronounced Tahitian influences (7, pl. 9). Modern houses on Easter Island are made of planks imported from Chile, and built on short piles to escape the humidity and the annoyance of rats. They are divided into rooms and provided with heterogeneous furniture from Chile. The old thatch roofs have been replaced by corrugated iron. Near the house is generally a little shed where cooking is done, mostly on small metal stoves imported from Chile. Tepano was the only islander to use stones in the construction of his hut, and was one of the few who slept on the floor.

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8: Behrens T-5 (1721-1722) 1908
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500 live fowls, which were like those of the Vierländen, this time without any boiled or roast ones, together with many roots, some red, some white, a good lot of potatoes which tasted almost like bread, and which are used by these people in the same way; and some hundreds of sugar-canes, great quantities of *pisang*[1], being Indian figs as large as a cucumber a span in length and of proportionate thickness, with a green rind. When one peels this off [the pulp] tastes like figs, or as sweet as honey: there are sometimes as many as a hundred on a single bunch. The leaf is from two to three feet broad and from six to eight feet in length. It is with these that our first parents should have covered themselves in Paradise after their unfortunate Fall, because it is almost the largest and strongest leaf which one meets with in Morning and Evening lands.

No animals were met with, as far as we penetrated on this occasion, except sundry species of birds; but there may be many other animals farther in the interior of the country, as the natives seemed acquainted with pigs when they saw some on board our ships.

The natives prepare their meals in pots made of clay or earth. Each household appeared to us to have its own.

The houses were from forty to sixty feet [*schuh*] long, six to eight feet [*schuh*] in width, and of similar height, set up on wooden stakes, daubed over with luting and covered in with palm leaves. As regards their subsistence it appears that it must be procured by tillage of the soil, as we saw it everywhere planted and bearing crops. Moreover the fields or lands were all measured off with a cord, and very neatly cultivated. At the time of our visit all their crops were maturing: the fields and trees were in full bearing, and I feel sure that if we had explored this country right through many good things would have been met with, since we were there in just the best season of the year.

No remarkable furniture was found inside their houses, except some red and white coverlets [*decken*] which they often use as apparel, and also for sleeping under. These coverlets felt like silk, to the touch, so that one could almost conclude they had looms by means of which they made them themselves.

These natives were universally blithe and merry, well-built, strong in limb, not exactly slender, yet nimble on their feet; friendly and pleasant in manner, but submissive withal, and also very timid. Most of them, when bringing any object such as

[1] *Pisang* is the Malayan generic term for the banana.

9: Forster T-5 (1774) 1777
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1774. MARCH. feet high, over which the people had built a round projecting funnel to keep off the wet. We crept on all fours into this opening, and found the inside of the hut perfectly naked and empty, there being not so much as a wisp of straw to lie down upon. We could not stand upright in any part except just in the middle, and the whole place appeared dark and dismal. The natives told us they passed the night in these huts, and we easily conceived their situation to be uncomfortable, especially as we saw so very few of them, that they must be crammed full, unless the generality of the people lie in the open air, and leave these wretched dwellings to their chiefs, or make use of them only in bad weather.

Besides these huts, we observed some heaps of stones piled up into little hillocks, which had one steep perpendicular side, where a hole went under ground. The space within could be but very small, and yet it is probable that these cavities likewise served to give shelter to the people during night. They may, however, communicate with natural caverns, which are very common in the lava currents of volcanic countries. Such caverns are very frequent in Iceland, famous for having been the dwelling-places of the ancient inhabitants. Mr. Ferber, the first mineralogical historian of Vesuvius, has noticed such a subterraneous hole in one of the modern lavas of that mountain. We should have

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
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342 and it is very rare to find them still in place, as they were comparatively light, weighing from one to two hundredweight, and easily carried off. Even the heavier stones were at times seized [727] upon as booty in enemy raids; one measuring 15 feet was pointed out to us near an ahu on the south coast, which had been brought all the way from the north side of the island. In the middle of one side of the house was a doorway, and in the front of it a porch, which had also stone foundations. The whole space in front of the house was neatly paved with water-worn boulders, in the same manner as the ahu. This served as a stoep on which to sit and talk, but its practical utility was obvious to ourselves in the rainy seasons, when the entrance to our tents and houses became deep in mud (fig. 84A). Near the main abode was a thatched house which contained the native oven, the stones of which are often still in place. The cooking was done Polynesian [252 354] fashion: a hole about 15 inches deep is lined with flat stones, a fire is made within, and, when the stones are sufficiently heated, the food, wrapped up in parcels, is stacked within and covered with earth, a fire being lighted on the top.

Many of the surviving old people were born and brought up in these houses, which are known as "haré paenga." The old man, for example, before alluded to, who was brought out to Raraku, roved round the mountain telling with excitement who occupied the different houses in the days of his youth. He gave a particularly graphic description of the scene after sundown, when all were gathered within for the evening meal. In addition to the main door, there was, he said, an opening near each end by which the food was passed in and then from hand to hand; as perfect darkness reigned, a sharp watch had to be kept that it all reached its proper owners. He lay down within the old foundations to show how the inhabitants ● [513] slept. This was parallel to the long axis of the house, the head being towards the door; the old people were in the centre in couples, and the younger ones in the ends. The largest of these houses, which had some unique features, measured 122 feet in length, with an extreme width of 12 feet; but some 50 feet [512] by 5 feet or 6 feet are more usual measurements. They were often shared by related families and held anything from ten to thirty, or even more, persons.

500 The food consisted of the usual tropical produce, such as

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
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to obtain the painted slabs within, but most are in fair, and some in perfect, preservation. The form of construction suitable to the low ground has perhaps been tried here and abandoned, for some of the foundation-stones, pierced with the holes to support the superstructure of stick and grass, are built into the existing dwellings. The present buildings (fig. 104) are well adapted to such a wind-swept spot; they are made of stone laminæ, with walls about 6 feet thick; the inside walls are generally lined with vertical slabs, and horizontal slabs form the roof.

The greater number are built at the back into rising ground, and their sides and top are covered with earth; the natives call them not "haré," or houses, but "ana," or caves. Where space permits it, the form is boat-shaped, but some have been adapted to natural contours.[1] The dwellings vary in shape and size, from 52 feet by 6 feet to 8 feet by 4 feet; the height within varies from 4 feet to over 6 feet, but it is the exception to be able to stand upright. In some cases they open out of one another, and not unfrequently there is a hatch between two through which food could be passed. The doorway, with its six foot of passage, is just large enough to admit a man. (Into each of them, armed with ends of candles, we either crawled on hands and knees, or wriggled like serpents, according to our respective heights.) The slabs lining the wall, which are just opposite the doorway, and thus obtain a little light, are frequently painted; some of them have bird and others native designs, but perhaps the most popular is a European ship, sometimes in full sail, and once with a sailor aloft in a red shirt (fig. 105). Inside the houses we found the flat, sea-worn boulders which are used as pillows and often incised with rough designs; there were also a few obsidian spear heads, or mataa, and once or twice sphagnum from the crater, which was used for caulking boats, and also as a sponge to retain fresh water when at sea. Outside many of the doors are small stone-lined holes, which we cleared out and examined. They measure roughly rather under 2 feet across by some 15 inches in depth. Our guides first told us that they were "ovens," but, as no ash was found, it seems probable that their second thoughts were right, and they were used to contain stores.

[1] An accurate large scale plan of the village was made by Lieutenant D. R. Ritchie, R.N., and every house was measured and described by the Expedition.